

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Lowell M. Porter



Office of the State Fire Marshal

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For Immediate Release

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Washington State Patrol - Office of the State Fire Marshal Pledges Continued Support with O-ring Fire Sprinkler Head Voluntary Recall Program

In May 2001, the Office of the State Fire Marshal completed an extensive 18-month investigation into a report of a fire sprinkler head failing to flow water after the glass bulb was broken out.

Chief Lowell Porter announced today that after viewing the results of the investigation, the Washington State Patrol - Office of the State Fire Marshal believes there is a significant life safety risk to the occupants of buildings utilizing these sprinkler heads for fire protection. The O-ring sprinkler heads—manufactured from 1989 to 2000 by Central, Star, or Gem—are used in a wide range of applications, from homes to schools to high-rise apartments.

Due to the results of this investigation and corresponding data from Underwriter's Laboratories (U.L.), the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Tyco Corp LP, on July 19, 2001, announced a nationwide Voluntary Recall Program (VRP) of 35 million O-ring type fire sprinklers.

Since the VRP was announced, 800,000 of the estimated 1 ¾ million O-ring type sprinkler heads in Washington State have been identified, and claims filed, for free replacement by the manufacturer.

"We are pleased with the progress of the VRP, but believe many O-ring sprinkler heads are likely to remain in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, schools, and other high-risk occupancies in which the occupants and residents are living and working under a false sense of security. Because of that, we remain committed to continue our investigation in identifying the remaining O-ring sprinkler heads within our state and in assisting the facilities through the process of getting the heads replaced," says Acting Assistant State Fire Marshal Anjela Foster.

If anyone needs assistance in determining whether their sprinkler heads are part of the Voluntary Recall Program, or in obtaining a VRP claim form, they should contact:

✚ **Central O-ring Sprinkler Recall Customer Service Hotline** at (866) 505-8553, or www.sprinklerreplacement.com

✚ **Washington State Fire Marshal's Office--Deputy State Fire Marshal Larry Glenn** (360) 570-3133 or larry.glenn@wsp.wa.gov

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State, including inspections of state-licensed facilities, plan review of fire protection systems and school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information, you may visit our Web page at www.wsp.wa.gov and then click on "State Fire Marshal."

For more information, *contact the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.*

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